"The Truth shall make you FREE."—Christ.

The Christian Freeman.

A MONTHLY UNITARIAN JOURNAL,

DEVOTED TO RELIGIOUS, MORAL, AND SOCIAL PROGRESS.

No. 4.—Vol. XII.] APRIL, 1868. [Price 1½d.

THE SENTIMENTS OF EMINENT MEN ON RELIGION.

"Brought up in the Unitarian faith, Unitarianism is to me the gospel; and I love and honour it with all the strength of my religious affections, and all the fondness of a grateful child."—H. W. Bellows.

"There was some agreeable company at the house; among them a lady, very well read, the daughter of a bishop, who told me she had never heard the *name* of Dr. Channing! I gave her a great shock by telling her I was a Unitarian."—William H. Prescott, *the Historian*.

"That a Christian spirit is of more value than Christian truth. To discover truth is professedly the aim of us all. Let us pursue the path that seems the most likely to lead to her abode, with ardour but not with animosity, and if we have been convinced that we have been happy enough to find her, let us not insult those who in our estimation may have been less successful."—Dr. Joseph Priestley.

"Remember, the essence of religion is a heart void of offence towards God and man. Hold fast by this sheet-anchor of happiness—Religion; you will often want it in the times of most danger—the storms and tempests of life . . . . . You have been *taught*, indeed, that right belief, or orthodoxy, will, like charity, cover a multitude of sins. Be not deceived. The chattering of some unintelligible sounds called creeds, and unfeigned assent and consent to whatever the Church enjoins—religious worship and consecrated feasts—repenting on a death-bed—pardons rightly sued out, and absolutions authoritatively given—have done more towards making and continuing men vicious than all the natural passions and infidelity put together."—Lord Chatham.

"I feel constantly, and more and more deeply, what an unspeakable calamity a Calvinistic education is. What a dreadful thing it was to me! I have to reason the old image away, and replace it with the loveliness and beauty of another; and, in that process, the zeal, the alacrity, the fervour, the spontaneousness, are, partially at least, lost. You help me to recover it, and fix the true image, and thus you help my spiritual life. And, as you have opportunity, my dear friend, let me entreat you to impart this loving side of religion to my little boys. Above all treasures, I long that they should have this."—Horace Mann.

"Religion is the concern of all men; it ought, therefore, to be clear and plain. An obscure religion is of little or no value; indeed it seems to me one of the greatest absurdities that can be conceived. If God make a revelation, intended for the general benefit of mankind, one would expect it should be clear. I have a strong persuasion the gospel was plain at first. If Christianity is not plain now, I apprehend it must be our own fault. A doctrine that contains plain directions of duty, and plain promises of reward, sufficient to encourage to duty in all circumstances, to strengthen against temptations, to give comfort under affliction, to calm the affections—this is true religion. This is a pearl of great price, a treasure, indeed, for which a man may reasonably part with all that he has to buy it."—Dr. Nath. Lardner.

"I love to read and to study the writings of revered and leading Unitarians in past times, for I believe that they were substantially in the right, and that the principles of Christian freedom and progress, as announced, defined, and defended by the fathers of our faith, are the real principles and the only ones on which Unitarianism can rest."—John A. Andrews.

HELEN MARIA WILLIAMS.

Doctor Andrew Kippis, a man of much literary distinction, was busily at work in his library upon his great book, an improved edition of the "Biographia Britannica," a work so elaborate and so comprehensive, and involving so much research, that it is not probable it can ever be completed on the same scale with the five volumes he was enabled to finish. Absorbed in his reading, his brow furrowed with deep thought, the pen in his hand with which he took his notes, he did not notice several light taps upon his door, till a louder and more decided one arrested his attention. An annoyed expression crossed his face as he put down his pen and said, "Come in;" but it gave place instantly to a bright welcome, a genial fatherly look, as a young lady entered the room. She had a face lovely for its intellectual contour, its depth of spiritual expression, and the imagination and loving trust and faith which beamed from her eyes. She looked very young; eighteen summers had not yet passed over her head, but the ripeness and maturity of genius had placed its stamp upon her. She was modest and retiring in her manner, but the good doctor's warm greeting soon reassured her, and she was not long in coming to the principal object of her visit. "You were kind enough, sir, to encourage me in my literary aspirations, and I have ventured to bring you this, begging for your advice and criticism. If I could have it published I should be very glad, as it might open a way to me in the future; but you will be candid with me, I know, and not, from fear of wounding my feelings, suppress your true judgment."

The good old doctor took the roll she gave him, and laying his hand kindly upon her head, with a look that carried a benignant blessing with it, he said: "Thank you, my dear child, for coming to me in this trusting way. Leave your manuscript. I will read it carefully, and then tell you whether you had better burn it and begin again, or if I find it possessed of sufficient merit I will aid you in getting a publisher for it."

"Thank you," she said, catching the old wrinkled hand, which caressed her so kindly, and pressing it to her lips. "You are so kind to me, and I have no one else in this great London to help me. If I should succeed in this venture, we will all of us come to live 'in the great city.'"

This was the first introduction of Helen Maria Williams to the literary world. She was born in the north of England in 1762. Her father was an officer in the English army. Her mother, a Scotchwoman, proud of her descent from the covenanters, who implanted in their children with their earliest breath a love of religious freedom and a spirit of devout consecration. On their father's side they had a strong infusion of Huguenot blood, so that it was no wonder that freedom of religious thought was one of the prominent characteristics of the family. The education of Miss Williams had been very thorough. She had been well-trained in classic lore, but subjects of more living interest claimed her deepest attention. The manuscript she had given to Doctor Kippis was a legendary poem, called "Edwin and Elfrida." It met with his cordial approval, and was published by his influence in 1792. The success of this poem brought the whole family to the vicinity of London, where they gathered about them a delightful literary circle, who fully appreciated the rare talents and lovely spirit of Miss Williams. In 1783 she published an ode on "Peace," and one on "Peru." This was followed by a volume of miscellaneous poems, and among them was the one by which she is known and recognised wherever Christ is preached, the one which endears her to every Christian heart, which expresses the aspiration of every true soul,

"Whilst thee I seek, protecting power."

It can never die out of Christian hymnology, and as long as its words of elevated hope, of cheerful trust, of ardent aspiration, are sung in arched cathedral or rustic chapel, repeated by the young and happy, or whispered by the pale lips of the dying, so long will the name of Helen Maria Williams be a consecrated one.

At this period of her life Divine Providence brought to her knowledge a young French family driven into exile for heretical opinions, and who were suffering frightful distress from the need of the bare necessaries of life. Their destitute condition appealed strongly to the sympathies of Miss Williams and her family. They took the poor refugees into their own home, and ministered to them with loving care.

Monsieur Augustin du Fossé had married Monica Coquerel. Both had been educated in the very bosom of the Jansenist school; both had burst its bounds, and revelled in full religious liberty. M. Fossé had written several tracts against the doctrine of the Trinity, and for this he and his lovely wife were exiled from their home. A warm friendship arose between them and their benefactors, and a few years after, when M. du Fossé was allowed to return home, and his property was restored to him, he did not rest till he had induced Mrs. Williams and her three daughters to visit him at his château, and this visit was productive of results that changed the home of the English family, for one of the daughters, Miss Cecilia Williams, married a nephew of Madame Fossé, Athanase Martin Coquerel, and their eldest son was the beloved pastor for whom all of liberal thought, not only in France, but wherever liberal Christianity is known, are now mourning.

The young English wife did not live long to enjoy her sunny home, and, dying, bequeathed her two boys, both infants, to the care of her mother and sisters. Obeying this call of sacred duty, Mrs. Williams and her two daughters once more left England, came to France, and formed there a permanent home, devoting themselves to the education of their nephews. Miss Williams was well known in the French literary circles. Her poems had been translated by two popular academicians, Boufflers and Esmenard, and she had also written many letters and essays on the French Revolution, with which she had sympathised with an ardent enthusiasm, and believed in its glorious aspirations, but she was saddened by and deplored its frightful desecrations and mournful issue. She became an earnest Girondist, and wrote many articles to recommend their doctrines. Her influence and sympathies were so well known that under the tyranny of Robespierre, who detested anything like true and enlightened liberty, she was arrested and kept for some time a close prisoner in the Temple at Paris.

But Miss Williams' interest in and devotion to French politics and literary pursuits did not draw away her attention from the education of her nephews. She and her sister watched over them with the most assiduous care, and spared nothing to cultivate their minds and develope their higher natures. They lived in the most refined manner, and gathered around them all the remarkable men of the times—Le Brun, Bernardin St. Pierre, Bishop Gregoire, Kosciusko, the artists Gerard and Bitaube, and the most interesting of all, Humboldt, whose works (fourteen volumes) she translated into English—an enduring monument of her admiration for this great man. The Reign of Terror swept away most of the fortune of these interesting women, and they found they must depend wholly upon their own exertions for the means of support. The translation of "Humboldt's Voyages" was a long and wearisome task; but Miss Williams was assisted in it by her nephew, Athanase Coquerel, who had completed his education, and consecrated his fine intellect and noble powers to the cause of liberal Christianity, thus realising the fondest wishes of his devoted aunts, and amply repaying them for the sedulous care bestowed on him. He was soon called to a pastorate in Amsterdam, and left them with the deepest regret. He never forgot for a single day what he owed to these pious women, and in the first book he published, "Poetical Sketches from the Old Testament," after having in an introduction gone over the principal events and the most memorable names in the Bible, he says: "To my faithful memory each one of these names recals those women who made me love these names. They recal those maternal voices that instructed my infancy, and taught me to lisp these great names. My age shall not be false to those cares and prayers. I have guarded the flame of faith, and the tribute I offer to those cherished shades are these hymns which I write, and which are as free and sincere as if written upon their tomb."

What an incentive and an encouragement, are these words of a brave and grateful heart to all mothers, sisters, and female instructors, to faithful care and assiduity in the instruction of the young. And what a monument is this testimony to woman's worth and influence in society.

It was the sunlight of this love which warmed and brightened the last few years of the Misses Williams. Poor and feeble, gay Paris was no longer a pleasant home for them; their associations were with the past, and they had no joy save that shed

by the lamp of faith on their onward course. The brilliant, popular, young pastor in his home at Amsterdam remembered their closed saloons, their daily struggles with discouragement and poverty, and stretched forth his hand of love, and drew them from the heartless capital to his own genial, heart-warm home, and there he ministered to them, brightening their last days. They did not live long, but passed on within a few months of each other to receive the "Well done, good and faithful servant." The talents which Miss Helen Maria Williams received were certainly not buried in a napkin, but were placed out at interest, and have already yielded more than a hundred-fold. — *Christian Register.*

GOOD AND EVIL.

Once when the messenger that stays
For all beside me stood,
I mused on what great Shakespeare says
Of evil and of good.

And shall the evil I have done
Live after me, I said;
When lo! a splendour like the sun
Shone round about my bed.

And a sweet spirit of the skies
Near me, yet all apart,
In whispers like the low wind's sighs,
Spake to my listening heart;

For 'tis for fancied good I claim,
That men do wrong—not wrongs desire;
Wrapping themselves, as 'twere, in flame
To cheat the fire.

Not what God gives, but what He takes,
Uplifts us to the holiest height;
On truth's rough crags life's current breaks
To diamond light.

From transient evil I do trust
That we a final good shall draw;
That in confusion, death, and dust
Are light and law.

That He whose glory shines among
The eternal stars, descends to mark
This foolish little atom swung
Loose in the dark.

But though I should not thus receive
A sense of order and control,
My God, I could not disbelieve
My sense of soul.

For though, alas! I can but see
A hand's breadth backward or before,
I am, and since I am, must be
For evermore.

Alice Carey.

SON OF GOD (AS A TITLE OF JESUS).

The New Testament is written in the Greek language, but its writers were most of them Jews, who spoke and thought in some dialect of Hebrew. They thought in one language and wrote in another. Hence, as is well known to all scholars, this Greek book is full of Hebrew expressions — Hebraisms, as they are called, which must be explained by the help of Hebrew, and which the English reader will understand better if he makes himself well acquainted with the Old Testament. The expressions in the Old Testament should always be well considered, as a help to the New Testament.

One of the most important Hebraisms in the New Testament, and which has led to serious theological error, is the well-known title "Son of God." In order to understand it we must consider the Hebrew use of the word "son," and also the Hebrew use of the genitive case in place of an adjective, such as using "of God" for "godly." We will examine a few instances. First, of the genitive case. In the Old Testament a prophet is repeatedly called "a man of God," meaning "a godly man." A sorrowful man is called "a man of sorrows." A messenger is "a man of tidings." A generous man is "a man of gifts." A wicked man is "a man of Belial." We have the same expressions in the New Testament, where the unjust steward is in the original "a steward of injustice."

But the use of the word "son" by the Hebrew writers, without the least relationship to parentage or birth, is even still more foreign to our English notions. This is sometimes shown in the English translation, but it is more often lost sight of, because the sentence would not always be understood if translated word for word. Thus a man doomed to die is called "a son of death." Men of low rank are "sons of the people." A lamb of the first year is "the son of a year," and so when Saul had reigned one year he is called "the son of a year." The steward of Abraham's house is called "the son of the possession" of his house. Abraham was "the son of one hundred years," or one hundred years old, when Isaac was born. The nations to the east of Palestine are "sons of the east."

Rebels are "sons of rebellion." Brave men are "sons of valour." A man who deserves to be beaten is "a son of stripes." The soldiers are "sons of the army." Hostages are "sons of pledges." A wicked man is a "son of Belial." Such instances might be very much increased in number, but these are enough to show that "a son of God" is a very natural description of a godly man. So in Genesis vi. we read that the sons of God took as wives some of the daughters of men; and we may understand it as meaning that some of the favoured race, the worshippers of the true God, married into the heathen nations around. It was in this sense only that Jesus was first called a son of God. Jesus himself uses the words in this sense when he says (Matt. v. 9) "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God." So the Psalmist (lxxxii. 6) tells the Jews that they are "all sons of the Most High."

But after a time, as the reverence for Jesus and the admiration for his character and his teaching increased, his followers were not contented without giving to him a higher rank as a divine teacher. They then began to take the above title literally, and said that Joseph, Mary's husband, was not his real father, and borrowing a thought from the Pagans, said that his parents were God and the Virgin Mary. This was strictly in imitation of the Pagans, who had said that many of their kings were sons of some God, and had no earthly father. Alexander the Great called himself the son of Jupiter Ammon. Every Egyptian king had called himself a son of their god Ra, or the sun. The Roman emperor Augustus, under whom Jesus was born, is styled on the Greek coins "a son of God," though the Romans themselves did not adopt that particular kind of flattery.

It is well known that those chapters in the New Testament which assign to Jesus a miraculous birth are an after addition. Indeed they cannot be reconciled with the genealogies which trace his descent from David through Joseph as his father, nor with those passages which say that he was the carpenter's son. And it is a great satisfaction to consider that it needs only to put aside the first two chapters in Matthew, and then we shall be at liberty to give to the words "Son of God" their real meaning as a godly man, the meaning which may be shown to belong to them by the whole usage of the Hebrew language.

The above is not the only case in which the use of the word "son" by the Hebrews has led to a similar mistake. Rechab is the Hebrew for a chariot, and hence a chariot driver would naturally be called a Rechabite But instead of that he is called a "son of Rechab," or a son of the chariot; and Rechab, the chariot, has been taken as the name of a man, the founder of the family. Many such cases might be quoted of an imaginary father having been created by this use of the word "son."

Whenever Jesus is styled in the New Testament either "a Son of God" or "the Son of God," so it should be left, and the commentator should explain its real meaning; but it would be better not to introduce the words into our prayers and sermons, as they lead the unlearned into a mistake. When we would describe the relationship of Jesus to our common Heavenly Father, it is safer, considering the superstition with which we are surrounded, to use the words of his immediate disciples, who in their prayers to God styled him "Thy holy servant, Jesus." See Acts iv. 27, 30, in a correct translation.

SAMUEL SHARPE.

PROOFS OF GOD.

"The Deity is as conspicuous in the structure of a fly's wing as He is in the sun himself."—*Derham.*

THE sky was like an amethyst,
Resplendent was the sod,
And yet the daring Atheist
Denied the being of God.

And while I read the impious tract
Of this presumptuous sage,
Not knowing how to think or act,
A fly lit on its page.

It was no larger than a speck
Of dust upon the hill,
Yet as it moved its wings and neck
I traced the Maker's skill.

The lenses of its tiny eye,
Its gay integument—
Its shape, its colour, and its size—
Were more than argument.

Confuted by a little fly,
With pity, more than ire,
In twain I tore the wicked lie,
And flung it in the fire.

Upton St. Leonards. H. Y. J. T.

THE UNITARIAN POSITION.

THE last returns for the Unitarian Almanack show the number of Unitarian places of worship in Great Britain and Ireland to be rather above 350, of which 274 chapels are provided with ministers, and the remainder are kept open by supplies from a distance, or by the zeal of lay workers at home. The Unitarian Associations, Societies, and Unions, for the spread of religious opinions in these islands are 23 in number, without including Domestic Missions, Sunday-School Associations, and other works of charity. Seven periodicals, weekly, monthly, or quarterly, collect our denominational news, or help the interchange of religious opinions. We have two institutions devoted to the education and training of Unitarian ministers, the one in London, the other in Manchester, which together have educated a third part of our ministers. The free and open colleges of Belfast, Carmarthen, Dublin, and Glasgow, have sent forth almost as many more; while the remaining and larger third of the number have come from the ranks of the orthodox, or without a special theological education.

Unitarian opinions are but just beginning to make their way in Scotland; the half dozen chapels there have hitherto found it up-hill work, and almost impossible to do much in schools and other congregational works. Their services have been too often, through "fear of the folk," scantily attended, and too much composed of individual hearers wanting in the hearty warmth of family attendance.

In Ireland, on the other hand, where dissent has been protected, and has at the same time, we fear, been injured by the *Regium Donum*, the Unitarian chapels have been sufficient in number, and only wanting in life and activity. We rejoice, nevertheless, to say we know several of our ministers and laymen in Ireland who have done an immense and life-long service to our common good cause.

Over England the Unitarian opinions are very unequally spread. But for the most part they flourish most where the population lies the closest. Lancashire, with its great manufacturing districts, has 52 Unitarian chapels. Middlesex, and some other of our southern counties, have each of them half that number. In several of the active trading towns, such as Manchester, Sheffield, and Bristol, the Unitarians maintain a useful and honoured position. While in some of the eastern and western counties, where the population is slightly on the decline, our opinions find it hard to keep their ground.

Amidst a great deal that is inspiriting and encouraging there are still some drawbacks. Unhappily, the tide of ritualism has in some places set in among us, with its heedless adoption of ecclesiastical ceremony, its imitation of the outward form of orthodoxy, its admiration of orthodox sentiment—its toying with conformity.

But a more dangerous evil yet has sprung up among us that, like the tares among the wheat, threatens to spread and to swallow us up. And this is a looseness of religious opinion, a habit of overlooking differences of doctrine, of glossing over distinctions of thought, till we are in danger of confounding together black and white, truth and falsehood. Nothing but a fresh start of earnest work can help us in this case—nothing but the exercise of moral courage and straightforwardness, of self-denial and humbleness, can ever bring us back from what is far more of a moral than an intellectual fault. It is on this account that we gladly and thankfully welcome a vigorous beginning among our churches of unpaid lay-preaching, of cottage services, in part self-supporting, of week-night religious discussion meetings open to the public, of the determination to put in the foreground the Unitarian name.

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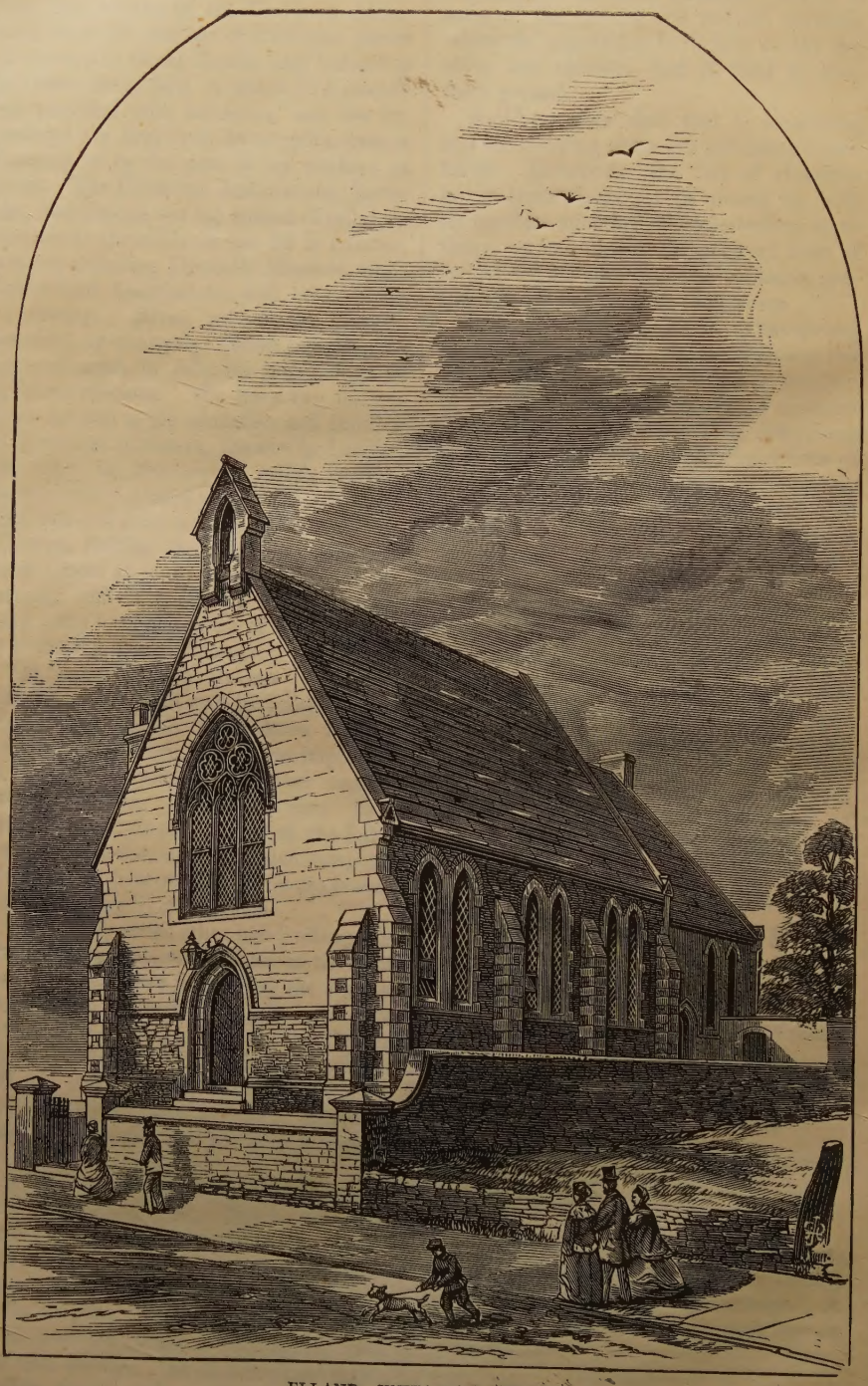

ELLAND UNITARIAN CHAPEL.

ELLAND UNITARIAN CHAPEL.

This handsome chapel, recently built at the cost of £1000, is another of the proof of the signal service rendered in the north by the Yorkshire West Riding Unitarian Missionary Society. A peculiar interest attaches to this church from its being a renewal of trust and erection of this neat Gothic church and school, near to an old chapel descended to us from the earliest period of nonconformity. Mr. Hunter, in his "Life of Oliver Heywood," writes:—"On September 26, 1697, Mr. Heywood preached at the chapel at Elland to a full assembly. The chapel has arisen chiefly by the exertions of the family of Brooksbank, who resided there;" and in his index he calls this "the foundation of the chapel." The late chapel seemed to bear indications of its being the second built on the site, and had been continuously kept open "for the worship of Almighty God," in accordance with the will of Joseph Brooksbank, dated 1715, "by protestant nonconformists." By that will he left the chapel, and a small rent-charge of £14 per annum to be paid to the minister, "as long as liberty be granted." Since the foundation several honoured ministers have occupied the pulpit. But during the last half century great changes have taken place in the locality, and the attendance had reached the lowest ebb. About six years ago the surviving trustees applied to the Charity Commissioners for the appointment of new trustees, when seven gentlemen of the West Riding undertook the trust, who, in conjunction with the committee of the West Riding Unitarian Mission Society, arranged for Elland being taken up as one of the mission stations. The old chapel being in a state of great decay, about three years ago, the new church was commenced. It is in the pure early English style of architecture, the school-room forming the chancel, and giving to the exterior a very pleasing effect, besides admitting of its being at any future time thrown into the church. The old pulpit, which is a fine specimen of carving in black oak, has been removed, and is fixed at the chancel end, and a raised communion table placed alongside of it. The whole is pewed with open benches with backs, and will accommodate about 160 hearers, without the choir arrangement. The school is adapted for about 100 scholars, and has a lofty, high pitched roof, is well lighted, and has separate entrances for boys and girls. The opening services were conducted by the Rev. P. W. Clayden, of Nottingham, on June 5, 1866. The Rev. T. R. Dobson is the present minister.

ALONE.

Alone! no voice to cheer me on,
No feet to tread with me
The shadowed path that stretching on,
Ends in eternity.

Alone! my sad heart fainter grows,
My feet begin to tire,
Yet still the thorny way I tread
Through bramble and through mire.

Alone! alone! no footprint seals
Its impress on the sand;
I hear no step, the wave of death
Has swept the barren strand.

Before, I dare not look;
Behind, O grass-green graves,
You stand between me and the past
And dim those golden days.

Your shadow hides those joyous hours
And that unbroken ring;
Dark falls between me and those days
The veil of suffering.

Why must the oil of bitter woe
Be poured upon my head?
Why must some joy in living love,
And I bemoan my dead?

O Christ! the path that thou hast trod
Shall I refuse to tread?
Through thorny ways and shadowed paths
I go where Thou hast led.

The eye of faith can dimly see
Thy footprint on the shore;
I cannot tread the way alone
Where Thou hast past before.

So, taking up my heavy cross,
Onward with joy I press;
I see no more the shadowed path,
But count it only bliss.

With Him to wear the thorny crown
And press the cup of woe;
With Him, with bleeding hands and feet,
The weary way to go.

Through Him to thread new blessings on
My sad life's broken string,
By Him find heaven, and then for Him
Perfect the broken ring.

Harrie Evans.

THE LONDON UNITARIAN LADIES' VISITING SOCIETY.

THE primary object of this society is the promotion of a friendly intercourse with the working classes of our congregations, while it is distinctly understood that no class be excluded. We need everywhere a more active manifestation of sympathy among our people, and this organisation is intended to promote it. It is believed that a very small portion of time abstracted from our families may promote a very useful work, and be instrumental of the greater success of our churches and much comfort to many of our people. We are happy to inform our friends that already eighty ladies in London and its vicinity have promised to aid this good work, and have accepted the following as the basis of this institution:—

1. That this society be called "The London District Unitarian Ladies' Visiting Society."

2. That it have for its objects the promotion of friendly intercourse with the families, especially of the working classes, connected with our churches and schools. That the visitors are particularly requested to regard the operation of this society as simply for the purpose of friendly intercourse with our people, and for conveying information to them of our chapels, schools, services, &c., and on no account for almsgiving.

3. That the members of this society shall consist of ladies willing to call occasionally at the homes of our people.

4. That as there are times when persons connected with our country as well as our town congregations are placed in our London Hospitals, it is hoped that the visitors of the district will give them a friendly call at the Hospital.

5. That in case of the removal of a family, the visitor is requested to notify the secretary, if possible, of their new address, whether in town or country, so that it may be forwarded to the visitor in the new locality.

6. That a meeting of the visitors shall be convened in the spring of each year.

7. That the officers of this society shall consist for the present of the secretaries of the London District Unitarian Society, and Robert Spears, 27, Grosvenor Park, Camberwell, to whom all correspondence is for the present to be addressed.

We are persuaded that in London no single church can carry out a system of visiting at all adequate to the wants of our people. We know of some churches where the members lie scattered from east to west a distance of twenty miles, and from north to south a distance of ten miles; hence the necessity of a more general organisation than any one church can embody. The ladies of this society who have tendered their names belong at present to nineteen of our London churches, and we are now in a position to say to friends and members in London and the country, they need not for a moment hesitate to send us the address of any whom they would like to see visited and attached to our schools or churches. We have had printed a small card containing the address of our several places of worship, and shall place a few in the hands of each visitor, who may be able to give other useful information to those who are new comers to London.

Various plans of usefulness have been suggested in connection with this society which we may briefly note, but cannot undertake at present that more than a friendly call will be made by our lady visitors; and this alone we are persuaded will always result in some good. The Rev. S. Bache, of Birmingham, has sent us an interesting report of their society. In one year the ladies encouraged savings among the working classes to the amount of £1241 16s. 4d. The Rev. Jeffery Worthington very properly says—"I have a strong feeling that it is most important to leave minor arrangements to the delicate feelings of the ladies themselves. In cases of special illness special attention is bestowed, and the minister is duly informed." And he adds, of their visiting society—"I believe the agency I have described to have been of great service. Again and again I hear acknowledgments on the part of our poorer members of the kindness shown to them. Again

and again I hear our members of a higher social grade express their pleasure at the friendly calls of the ladies, whose visits bind them more closely together in congregational interests. Again and again I have found the value of the assistance in the extension of a welcome to new comers, whether strange from a distant town or having been accustomed to the organisation prevalent in other Christian denominations. Again and again I have to acknowledge help in drawing to our worship those whom 'hard times' or other causes have kept long aloof."

A question has been proposed—"Do we intend our society to proselytise and make Unitarians?" No instruction of this kind is given, although we believe the mass of the people would be more industrious, virtuous, and happy, if they were Unitarians. Our chief aim is to call upon Unitarians and their families, and to show them kindness, and keep them attached to our institutions. Good books will be lent, we trust, where they are needed; and some of our ladies may possibly at times not be indisposed to sit down and read a suitable lesson, or offer a prayer with the aged and sick. We leave all those details in the hands of our visitors, who may or may not do such things. We are sure they will interest themselves in the welfare of the families they call upon. The example of a kind and unobtrusive spirit will never fail to ennoble and bless some heart, and shed a gleam of sunshine upon some home; and shall have at last the reward—"Ye are blessed of my Father, for I was a stranger, and ye visited me."

INTERESTING ON RELIGION.

Religion—Appearance of.—"The appearance of religion only on Sundays proves that it is only an appearance."—J. ADAM.

Religion—Armour of.—"Religion is the best armour that a man can have, but it is the worst cloak."—BUNYAN.

Religion—Characteristics of.—

"True piety is cheerful as the day,
Will weep, indeed, and heaves a pitying groan
For others' woes, but smiles upon her own."
—COWPER.

Religion and Morality.—"They that cry down moral honesty, cry down that which is a great part of my religion—my duty towards God, and my duty towards man. What care I to see a man run after a sermon, if he cozens and cheats as soon as he comes home. On the other side, morality must not be without religion, for if so, it may change as I see convenience. Religion must govern it."—SELDON.

Religion without Superstition.—"A man should be religious, not superstitious."—GELL.

Religion—Virtues of.—"It is heaven upon earth to have a man's mind move in charity, rest in Providence, and turn upon the poles of truth."—BACON.

Religion—Elevating Principle of.—"Religion is for the man in humble life, and to raise his nature, and to put him in mind of a state in which the privileges of opulence will cease, when he will be equal by nature, and may be more than equal by virtue."—BURKE.

Religion—Pure.—"Religion consists not in knowledge, but in a holy life."—BISHOP TAYLOR.

Religion—Motive to.—"He is a pious man who, contemplating all things with a serene and quiet soul, conceiveth aright of God, and worshippeth Him in his mind; not induced thereto by hope or reward, but for His supreme nature and excellent majesty."—EPICURUS.

Religion—Practice of.—

"Live well, and then, how soon soe'er thou die,
Thou art of age to claim eternity."

Religion—Consistency in.—

"I venerate the man whose heart is warm,
Whose hands are pure, whose doctrine and whose life
Coincident, exhibit lucid proof
That he is honest in the sacred cause."
—COWPER.

Religion—Definition of.—"Religion is equally the basis of private virtue and public faith; of the happiness of the individual, and the prosperity of the nation."—W. BARROW.

Religion—Excellence of.—"It is an excellent thing when men's religion makes them generous, free-hearted, and open-handed, scorning to do a thing that is paltry and sneaking."—MATTHEW HENRY.

Religion—Mission of.—"Religion finds the love of happiness and the principle of duty separated in us; and its mission—its masterpiece—is to reunite them."—VINET.

LITTLE STORIES.

BY AUGUSTA LARNED.

The Philosopher's Stone.

A great philosopher once brought a wonderful stone to his little disciples, and asked them to look in it, and tell him what they saw.

"O," cried one, eagerly, "it is nothing but a piece of common looking-glass; I see myself as large as life."

"Nay," said another, snatching it from his hand, "I see a golden picture, golden houses, golden trees, a golden sky; all gold, in fact."

The phllosopher smiled, and passed the stone to a weak, pale child, who sat alone. The absent look faded at once from his face.

"O," exclaimed he, with enthusiasm, "I behold distant places, such as appear to me in dreams! Here are quaint old cities, and people who speak foreign tongues. It shifts, it changes. O, how beautiful! how enchanting! Here are lofty, snow-crowned mountains, and lovely blue lakes."

"Moonshine!" exclaimed another, snatching the gem from his hand. "I see nothing of all that, but here is a delightful boar hunt, in the depths of the forest. Now the huntsmen press the savage beast! Now he stands at bay! The dogs leap to his throat! they struggle! they tear him down! Hurrah! This is life; away with sentiment and absurdity."

The philosopher looked grave, and said: "We can only see just so much, and just such things, as our eyes are fitted to see. I have shown you this wonderful stone to show what you are most fitted to see, and think most of and care most for, and also to teach you faith in what is hidden from your vision, but revealed to others."

The Fallen Star.

A star fell into a meadow, and lay powerless amid the grass.

"O, who will help me up to my place in the sky?" cried the unhappy star.

"I will," said the dew. "Only wait till morning, and you shall get a free ride back to heaven."

The star looked at the dew with great contempt, and laughed a mocking laugh. "Only hear this insignificant little creature," cried he. "One would suppose, from his boastings, that he could do wonderful things."

The dew, thus repulsed, did not renew his offer; but next morning, when the sun rose gaily over the meadow, to his astonishment the star beheld his humble companion ascend the sky, and form a lovely purple cloud.

"O that I had not been so unwise as to reject the humble offer of elevation," sighed he. "My pride has cost me one of the best of opportunities. Never again will I scorn the lowliest means of advancement."

The Discontented Daisy.

A discontented daisy sat meditating one day in the midst of her green leaves. "O that I were yon blade of wheat," sighed she, in great dejection. "How joyfully would I consent to be cut down and harvested for the good of others. It is sweet to be of use in the world, even if we give up our lives. What am I now but a frail idle daisy, entirely ignorant of myself and the world, knowing only enough to spring up and bloom when summer has advanced so far as to bid me come? I should love to do something great and important. I am sure I am capable of great things if I only had the chance. The trees and shrubs look down upon me in spite of all I can do to win their good will, and many a blade of grass rises above my lowly station; everybody knows the grass family is not to be compared with ours for style. If I were only taller I think I might accomplish something in the world."

Upon this the daisy began stretching up with all her might, until by dint of great exertion her stem increased considerably in length, much to the amusement of an ill-natured thistle that grew beside her, and played the part in her world similar to that of critics in ours.

"O, you vain, good-for-nothing daisy," cried he, "don't you see that your philanthropy is the garment of your conceit, and that your discontent with your lot, and desire to do something great, spring from a morbid love of notoriety?"

The Weaver's Web.

A weaver was weaving a web in his loom. Day by day he added something to its length and breadth. Those who came past and glanced at it casually, were struck with admiration at its fineness and the

beauty of its design. Those who saw it not heard of its reputed excellence, and were willing to avow it a marvel of perfection.

Strange to say, only one side of the web was ever seen. This appeared to be composed wholly of gold and silken threads, and the people who praised it so loudly never thought of looking at the warp, or of inquiring if this richness and fineness ran through the fabric.

Now on a certain day the weaver died, and his web was left in the loom. People came to measure and apprise it. None doubted its excellence. But, lo, on examination, the under side was found composed of rotten shreds that scarcely held together. A great outcry was raised against the weaver, when a just man stepped forth, and said: "Do not let passion carry you away. Reflect that you are also culpable. When you praise the surface of things without looking at the under side, you invite deceit and dishonesty."

The Fadeless Palm.

Five youths were brought into the presence of the king. Within the hand of each was placed a signet ring, bearing upon its circle a mystic sentence.

"Go now," said the king, "and at the end of a year and a day return here, and to him who has rightly deciphered the words upon his ring shall be awarded the fadeless palm."

Diligently they laboured during the allotted time, for the fadeless palm was to them the highest object of ambition. All worked with equal assiduity, but only one of the five succeeded in completely reading the sentence upon his ring, so as to give to the thought it contained a complete and perfect expression. Some of his companions made out single words, and even guessed rudely at the hidden sense; one alone—the slowest and dullest of the five—deciphered but a single syllable.

On the appointed day the youths presented themselves before the king, and, as might have been expected, the fadeless palm was given to him who had correctly read his sentence.

Then his companions bore him on their shoulders amid the plaudits of the people. His friends invited him to banquets, and toasted him in cups of wine. Wherever the fadeless palm appeared palace doors flew open, and men bowed low with admiration.

So passed the time away in joy and feasting; but on a certain day the king summoned the five youths again into his presence, and the king, taking the fadeless palm from his hand, placed it in the hand of his slow companion, saying: "Plodding fidelity gains what profligate genius loses."

THE BIBLE.

BY THE REV. R. E. B. MACLELLAN.

A prevalent mistake regarding the Bible is to conceive of it as *one* Book, every part of which is of equal authority, and of equal value as an aid to our moral and religious instruction. The very contrary of this is the fact. The Bible, including in that term both the Jewish and the Christian Scriptures, is not a single work; it is a collection of sixty-six different compositions, bound together merely for the sake of convenience, which were written by men of different tastes, of different mental capacities, of different degrees of moral and spiritual attainment, which were not produced in an age, but at scores of successive dates, from almost eight hundred years before Christ till the beginning of the second century of our era. Some of those writings are much more valuable than others; thus the Psalms, the two Isaiahs, and Job, are incalculably more efficacious in nourishing the devotional spirit, and thereby inciting the life to deeds of virtue than the book of Leviticus, which prescribes the ritualistic practices of the ancient Hebrews, or than the book of Joshua and others, which are filled with details of war and carnage.

Even respecting the books which make up the *New* Testament, the same things may be affirmed—that some possess greater authority than others, and that some tend more to edification than others. Those having the greatest authority of all are the four Gospels, or rather those parts of them which contain the express words of Jesus Christ himself. He was not merely the "author," but also the "finisher" of our faith; he taught in person all that is needful, alike for belief and for practice; and to his plain utterances alone is the disciple who prizes his individual freedom disposed to bow, and that both with reverence and

affection. The express words of Christ himself are, moreover, not only the most authoritative, but the most sanctifying; so much so indeed, that his model of Prayer, his Two Commandments, his Parables of the Ten Talents, the Good Samaritan, and the Prodigal Son, if taken into the heart, and permitted thence to mould the demeanour, are in themselves almost sufficient to prepare for heaven, and to lead to heaven.

At a long distance behind the Gospels come, in authority and value, the book of Acts, and the genuine Epistles of Paul, Peter, James, and John. These men were all apostles; they had all known the Master personally, and received the Gospel directly from his own lips; and even when we discover, as we most frequently do, mistakes and misconceptions in their various writings, we are yet bound to permit the general scope of these writings to exercise much influence (secondarily, indeed, to the words of Jesus himself) in the formation of our religious opinions, and in the direction of our conduct.

There is still a third class of writings in the New Testament, whose authority and value (for the value sometimes depends on the authority) gradually diminish till they almost come to zero. There is the anonymous Epistle to the Hebrews, not the production of Paul, as stated in our printed Bibles, but of some one of an entirely different school of thought, most probably Apollos—but Apollos had never personally seen and heard Jesus, as Peter, James, Paul, and John had done; he was not, accordingly, an apostle, as each of them was; and, therefore, his epistle has less claim over our faith and practice than theirs. Of much less authority and value still is the Epistle of Jude, which, though it be the work of an apostle, yet so abounds in Rabbinical notions of fallen angels, and of Michael contending with Satan, and in references to the recently-fabricated book of Enoch, as to leave us with no very high opinion of the cool judgment or critical sagacity of the writer. Even of still less authority is what is erroneously called the Second Epistle of Peter, which was not written by that apostle—which was not written till long after his decease—which plagiarises wholesale from Jude, and which was the composition of some person completely unknown, who has therefore no title in equity to legislate for our convictions or consciences. In this category must also be placed the Revelation or Apocalypse, for its predictions that were never fulfilled, and its descriptions of vindictiveness both to God and to Christ, are sufficient proofs that its writer was not always under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Nevertheless, there is much that is good in each of the books lately mentioned. The Epistle to the Hebrews contains whole paragraphs, nay, whole chapters (such as the twelfth), worthy of Paul or John. The Epistle of Jude concludes with one of the grandest doxologies that was ever penned—"Now unto Him that is able to keep you from falling, and to preserve you faultless before the presence of His glory, with exceeding joy; to the only wise God, our Saviour, be glory, and majesty, dominion, and power, both now and ever, amen." The spurious Second of Peter contains a passage which is almost worthy of a place in the Sermon on the Mount—"And, besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity; for if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." The Apocalypse, again, among other things worthy of perpetual remembrance, presents us with the following sentence, which has sustained the hearts of thousands of mourners:—"And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away."

Hence it follows that we are required to read every separate book of the Bible with perpetual *discrimination;* with the free, yet reverent, exercise upon it of every faculty of our nature, with a constant endeavour to separate the "gold, silver, precious stones," from the "wood, hay, stubble." Nor does this seem such a difficult task as many would imagine. First, we must put aside, as the result of human ignorance and infirmity, everything even in *its* pages which contradicts the reason that God has given us, which contradicts the natural affections that God has given us, which

contradicts the intuitive perception of moral right and wrong that God has given us; above all, which contradicts the loftiest and worthiest conceptions we can form of God himself, as infinite holiness, infinite benevolence, infinite rectitude, and infinite mercy. And thus we most gladly receive *as divine* in the Bible everything that has a tendency to increase our love to our Heavenly Father, to increase our love to Jesus Christ, to increase our love to our fellow men, and to increase our love to moral goodness, for its own sole and blessed sake.

ST. PETER AND THE WICKET GATE.

THREE men together threw away
Their mortal robes at close of day,
And plunged beneath that darksome wave
Which our fair world will ever lave
Until the End shall be.
The surging billow wrapt them o'er,
And cast them on a mystic shore
'Neath shining walls of jasper bright,
Of amethyst and chrysolyte,
And there, in strange unearthly light,
They sought an entrance free
E'en at the little wicket gate,
Where Peter the Apostle sate.

"Behold me, saint," loud spake the first,
"The one true Church thy suppliant nurst
From childhood in her fostering arms,
And I, a duteous son, have striven
To guard her safely from alarms
'Gainst all the foes of earth and heaven.
The fight I fought in manhood's pride,
And when at dark'ning eventide
I trembling sought her soothing aid,
She for my parting spirit prayed
With crucifix, and book, and bell;
Then on her lap my head I laid
And died, while soft her tear-drops fell
In holy water o'er me, pure
As the cool dews on Hermon's brow!
Thus all absolved, annealed, secure,
I seek, blest saint, admission now
To the green earth and sunny skies
Of the celestial Paradise."

"And darest thou hope, benighted man,"
The next in eager tones began,
"To gain, by such a plea as this,
An entrance to the realms of bliss?
Far other mine—Apostle, I
Held scriptural truth in purity.
From touch of worldly pleasures e'er
I shrank as from a serpent—nay
I dreaded all things bright and fair;
And duly on the Sabbath-day
Kept my strict eye-balls on the ground,
Lest, by ill-chance, they wand'ring round
Should see the very lambs at play.
My life so rugged was, and bleak,
That I, in just return, may seek
Unbroken calm and endless rest
In the fair dwellings of the blest."

"How blind are ye!" the third exclaims,
"How poor, how palt.y are your claims!
Alas! Apostle, can it be
That I alone, of all the three,
Shall gain, by undisputed right,
A heritage with saints in light?
My knee I never bowed before
A shrine with tinsel glitt'ring o'er,
And walking e'er in virtue's way
What needed I a priest to lay
Those spectral fears himself can raise?
My altar was the old arm-chair
Where once my mother rocked me; there
I lit the sacrifice of pray'r,
And incense pure of grateful praise,
And undefiled in heart and hand—
Thou know'st it, Peter—here I stand,
Sure that the good are calling me
To join their blessed company."

He ceased, and all in silence now,
With quick'ning breath and bended brow,
Stood awestruck 'neath St. Peter's eye,
And felt, they knew not how or why,
'Twas fixed on them reprovingly.
"Ye see yon bench?—sit there and wait,
My children three," he gently said;
Then turning, closed the wicket gate
And left them startled and dismayed.

They sate them down in wond'ring fear,
But soon sweet gales of Eden bear
To their wrapt ears a matchless strain—
For lo! th' angelic hosts surround
The throne, a rainbow circles round,
And their ten thousand voices rise,
And swell, and fall, and rise again
In one stupendous song of praise
That echoes to the vaulted skies!
The three upon each other gaze,
While to their hearts' most hidden strings
One chord, loud-struck, strange trembling brings,
Their poor fond pride, their vain desires,
Consuming now in sacred fires
Of love and holy rapture die.
They rise—and reaching hand to hand,
In kindly brotherhood they stand,
Then on their faces prostrate fall,
And with a common impulse cry,
"'Tis the same God we worship all!"

A sudden light upon them glows,
For holy Peter eager throws
Back with glad hand the wicket gate,
"Come in," he cries, "poor children, come!
What! did ye in presumption dare
To think your heavenly Father's home
Was, even as your hearts, so strait
And narrow in its bounds that none
Of your own selves, save only one,
Could space obtain for entrance there?
Come, taste his bounties freely giv'n,
The unbought happiness of Heav'n.
Ye stumbled oft in dawning grey,
Yet strove to trace your path aright.
Change, then, the dim and doubtful light
In which ye've wandered, for the bright
Unclouded sunshine of eternal day!"

London. B. A. JOURDAN.

WAYSIDE GATHERINGS.

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Fashionable Religion.—Edward Everett said to a friend, "If you are willing to be reckoned with those who consider going to church as going to a fashionable exchange, or to a place of entertainment for a weary leisure day, why then it matters little where you go or where you do not go."

Noble Repentant.—A young clerk fell into bad company and was put in gaol for dishonesty. A former teacher went to see him on his discharge and offered to get him a situation in a new place where he might redeem his character. The lad exclaimed, "Can I not redeem my character where I lost it?" A nobler reply he could hardly have uttered.

Grotesque Creeds.—Lord Shaftesbury, the author of "The Characteristics," remarks that when heralds paint a griffin, or a red lion, or a unicorn upon a coat of arms, we must not suppose them ignorant of natural history. They paint those conventional monsters in the exercise of their profession; on other occasions they can describe animals properly. And so it is with the obsolete creeds and liturgies of a church established by law. The clergy, though they know better, and can talk more rationally when they choose, yet, like the heralds, are not allowed in their forms of prayer to depart from the stereotyped and established teachings, however absurd we may think them.

The Religion of Gentlemen.—As long as the Church of England holds out its great temptations in money and dignity, fashion and gentility will be sure to run in that direction. Hence the difficulty of spreading Unitarianism among the rich. King Charles II. is said to have had a conversation with a Presbyterian, who explained to the king the points in which his religion seemed more rational, and superior to that of the Church of England. But the king had a ready answer, to which the other could make no reply. "Your arguments," said he, "may be all very true, but Dissent is not the religion of a gentleman." From this anecdote we are tempted to draw a moral in the words of the Sermon on the Mount, "Blessed in spirit are the poor."

Dr. Jelf.—A gentleman writes to us: "You might have added to your "Remarkable Facts for Unitarians" the principal of King's College, London—Dr. Jelf—who, at a meeting of convocation, denounced Unitarianism in most bitter terms—himself the son of an Unitarian. The late Sir James Jelf was for several years a member of one of the most ancient Presbyterian chapels in England—and the last 150 years' Unitarian—that of Barton-street, Gloucester; where, with his first wife and daughter, he attended previous to his second marriage, when, from motives best known to himself, he left his "old love" and took to the new one, the Church of England—became a banker, mayor of Gloucester, and received the honour of knighthood in the reign of George III. So far worldly honours and riches followed the change in his religious views."

Sound Reasons.—Dr. Guthrie, the eminent Scottish divine, gives the following four reasons for total abstinence from intoxicating drinks: —"My head is clearer, my health is better, my heart is lighter, and my purse is heavier."

The Catechism. — Jeremy Bentham remarked of the Church Catechism that when a child answers the first question, "What is your name?" he no doubt speaks the truth. He says that which he knows to be true. But that is the only question in the catechism that he can answer truthfully. All the other answers are either false, or at least such as the child does not know to be true.

The Real Baby.—The baby is an animal, and so the child should be; and its devotion, on the whole, should be to its body. Whenever you see smart children, or studious children, or pious children, be sure that something is wrong, and do not weep if they die early; they would grow up spindling and weedy. Look out for, and hold fast by, a rollicking baby, that does not care a snap for its mind, or its soul, or its clothes, but has a big sense of the necessity of frequent dinners and long naps, and is a true Sybarite, and not ashamed of it.

Eternal Punishment Losing Ground.—A writer in *Religious Opinion* says :—"I have recently been informed that, in a place a little distance from London, at a meeting of about *twenty ministers*, who had *not* met upon this subject, but merely in a social and brotherly way, upon the question as to their faith in the popular view of 'Eternal Punishment' being raised, and those who held it being asked to hold up their hands, *not one* did so." We know this was not a meeting of Unitarian ministers, and therefore it shows a change coming over the Trinitarian ministry.

What my Child Thought.—On returning from a Wesleyan Sunday-school, our eldest daughter, Eliza Ann, about six years of age, said, after appearing seriously thoughtful for a little time: "Teacher told us that a man who was very rich died and was burned in a great fire. Does God do that, mother?" strongly emphasising the word God. Her mother answered, "We are told God will punish the wicked." After a few moments' pause, apparently thinking of *that* mode of punishment, she said in a tone of sadness, "If God does that I cannot like Him."—G. G. G.

The following are the terms for supplying the Christian Freeman, post free:—

1 copy	per year	2s. 6d.
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Communications for the Editor to be addressed to the Rev. R. Spears, 27, Grosvenor Park South, Camberwell, S., and all Business Letters to Edward T. Whitfield, 178, Strand, London.

Printed by Samuel Taylor, Graystoke-place, Fetter-lane, London, and Published by Edward T. Whitfield, 178, Strand.